



Body image dissatisfaction among adolescents

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Abstract: Body image dissatisfaction is a perceived concept of negative thought about one's own body. “Disturbances of body image perception are considered to be one of the central aspects of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa” (1.1). Many factors are negative to the body, such as body weight, figure, shape, etc.

Adolescents start to compare themselves with others (comparing is a cognitive process of learning, and this is the time to compare their own bodies with others). If peers start teasing others by looking at the bodies of others, and they also compare themselves with their own bodies, it is a main factor in the origin of dissatisfaction. The study on the human body started as early as 1935. Body image dissatisfaction is increasingly recognized as a global issue, affecting adolescents in both Western and non-Western countries over the years. and the adolescents should be aware of the consequences of their action towards their own body.

Keywords: Adolescent, body image, dissatisfaction.

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Introduction

Body Image Dissatisfaction can be defined as the negative attitude towards one's own body resulting from a perceived discrepancy between the actual body image (i.e., perceptions, thoughts, and feelings concerning one's actual physical appearance(1). Body weight dissatisfaction and fear of fatness in early adolescence are important risk factors for disordered eating behaviors, such as excessive dieting and striving for thinness, which are considered to be significant health concerns among health professionals worldwide(2). Studies show that girls are more likely than boys to feel dissatisfied with their bodies, often equating self-worth with appearance. These issues are not limited to Western countries but are also prevalent in Asian countries. Adolescents undergo various physical and psychological changes and make adjustments to their appearance(3). Nowadays, being thin and having a muscular body is desired within societies and adolescents, boys and girls, are dissatisfied with their body and perceive themselves as over-/underweight, trying to lose/gain weight to achieve the socially endorsed ideal of a beautiful body. This can lead to nutritional imbalances if paired with inadequate diets, negatively affecting health and development(2).

Methodology: Secondary data from various journals and articles related to the topic were reviewed.

History

The concept of body image dissatisfaction and its association with various factors among adolescents has been studied by numerous researchers over time. While no single individual "started" this research, key figures and theories have shaped its development. The history involves understanding how individuals perceive their bodies, the impact of social pressures, and the psychological consequences of dissatisfaction(4). Throughout history, the "ideal" body shape has varied considerably, from the curvaceous forms celebrated in ancient times to the slender figures promoted in the late 20th century. These shifts in cultural ideals significantly impact how adolescents perceive their own bodies.

Paul Schilder (1935): Schilder, an Austrian psychiatrist, is credited with introducing the concept of the "body image" in 1935. He defined it as the mental image an individual's of their own body, encompassing both physical appearance and the emotional experience of embodiment. Leon Festinger (1954): suggests that individuals evaluate their own opinions and abilities by comparing themselves to others. This comparison process can contribute to body image dissatisfaction, especially when individuals compare themselves to idealized body types presented in media and social contexts. Psychological and sociocultural theories in the 1980s and beyond expanded the focus to societal norms, peer influence, media, and



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internalization, exploring why body dissatisfaction became a widespread phenomenon. Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997): This theory posits that women are often socialized to internalize an observer's perspective on their bodies, leading them to self-objectify and monitor their appearance. This self-monitoring can increase body shame and anxiety, potentially contributing to body image dissatisfaction. From the 2000s onward, researchers recognized the global spread of body dissatisfaction as societies modernize and adopt Western beauty ideals.

Researchers have explored the influence of various demographic factors (age, gender, socioeconomic status) and psychosocial factors (peer influence, family dynamics, bullying) on body image dissatisfaction in adolescents. The increasing prevalence of social media and its impact on body image has become a significant area of study, with researchers examining how online exposure to idealized body types contributes to body dissatisfaction(5). Body Image Dissatisfaction among adolescents is measured using various scales, such as the Figure Rating Scale, Body Shape Questionnaire, Body Area Satisfaction Scale, and Silhouette Figures.

Conclusion

Body image dissatisfaction is increasingly recognized as a global issue, affecting adolescents in both Western and non-Western countries over the years. While research has advanced significantly, there is an ongoing need for more studies using rigorous methods to understand the complex interplay of factors contributing to body image dissatisfaction and to develop effective interventions. Foundational work by pioneers such as Paul Schilder (1935), Leon Festinger (1954), and Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) established key theoretical frameworks through body image, social comparison, and objectification theory. Adolescents should be aware of the consequences of comparing their body image with others since it is the source of dissatisfaction with their own body, and it is a negative thought.

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